

New Hampshire Rail Transit Authority

Chair: Peter Burling

Vice Chair: Katherine Hersh

Agenda

August 14, 2009, 10:00 am

LOB 201

Attendance: Peter Burling, Kathy Hersh, Kerrie Diers, David Preece, Mike Izbicki, Sen. Fuller–Clark (represented), Michael King, Tim Moore, Christine Walker, Tom Mahon, Malcolm Taylor, Nancy Larson, Mike Tardiff, Jay Minkarah, Kit Morgan, Representative Keans, Representative Williams

I. Call to Order – 10:00

II. Public Input – *Members of the public wishing to will be given an opportunity to address the NHRTA Board.*

Barbara Pressley, Nashua, provided a recap of Rail Summit in Burlington, VT with an emphasis on regional collaboration, and more funding opportunities available.

Peter Diernas – rail operator within the state, leases from Boston/Maine, NH suggested that this project needs to go forward now with an emphasis on passenger rail at least to Manchester and high speed to Montreal and freight for northern area. Passenger rail would benefit freight rail.

Mark Richardson – NH Businesses for Transportation and Infrastructure is made up of private–public partnerships, economic development, environmental organizations, and businesses. There is a wide range of support for this effort and are willing to support the NHRTA.

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Michael Thomas – Director of a railroad company in NY and PA, but lives in NH. He introduced himself and offered assistance and expertise to NHRTA

Peter Burling invited public present to introduce themselves.

III. Minutes – Minutes July 24, 2009

Mike Izbicki made a motion to approve the minutes of July 24, 2009, seconded by David Preece. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. Update on Grant Process

Peter Burling recapped meeting in VT and individual meeting with the Federal Railroad Administration last week. FRA is providing direction to New England that many applicants are not ready yet, except for the Downeaster, which is considered ready. There is a possibility of another \$8 billion per year for the next 6 years as well as additional funding for national rail. The FRA suggested that New Hampshire apply for \$3 million in planning funding.

Mike Izbicki stated that we are applying for the Track 3 study funds. The application is due on 8/24. This will be for \$3 million for the Concord to Boston corridor and requires a 50% match. Also, a Track 2 “shovel ready” application will be submitted on Oct 2 for Concord to Boston. This is the first round and we will push for both. We should hear outcomes in October or November for Track 3 and November – December for Track 2. The funds will be granted by January.

Shovel ready is defined as projects with a plan for operating costs. This project has an anticipated operating cost of \$10 million per year, with \$6 million collected from the fare box. For the foreseeable future, we anticipate that the shortfall would be paid

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for by CMAQ funding, which is what Downeaster has been using for the past 10 years. The two main points are that we must have ridership numbers and must have an operating agreement. NH needs to have clear operating rights or fee title, which is currently the block to going forward.

Jay Minkarah asked: where are we with negotiations with Amtrak? Peter Burling stated that we have had a good conversation with Amtrak officials.

Mike Izbicki commented that the FRA has stated that if we need to acquire ROW, that can be part of the program.

Christine Walker asked if the consultants are ok with the changes to the scope of work?

Mike Izbicki answered that there are sufficient funds for the Track 3 application which is due 8/24 and we might need additional funds to respond to responses to FRA inquiries.

Peter Burling clarified that we will have sufficient funds that we have raised for the applications.

Kathy Hersh commented that we still need to raise commitments for \$1.5 million match. Peter Burling stated that we have several sources to look to for match; we have private funds raised and looking at other sources for using match – in kind included. Peter asked for any creative ideas for consideration.

Jay Minkarah stated that we still need to recognize that if the Downeaster receives funding through this process that is still a huge benefit to the state.

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Peter Burling responded that any funding received to support projects in New England will be a big boost to the region. We should be able to get on a train in any capital and travel to any other capital in between states.

Barbara Pressley asked if FRA would break up projects and fund portions of projects. Peter Burling stated that is a possibility. We could have infrastructure orders first and Right of Way later.

Mike Izbicki stated that the ridership study showed 10–14 trips/day peak hours between 5:00 – 8:30 am and reverse. There would be a train every 30 minutes during peak and 90 minutes during non peak. This is intercity transportation connecting the 3 largest cities in NH to Boston. From Concord we expect 6500 passengers per day at peak hour and over 1 million riders per year. Express service would be under 90 minutes from Concord.

V. Logo discussion

Christine Walker reviewed logo contest handout rules and guidelines and also the list of media sources. The committee would like to have the go ahead to release this.

Tom Mahon moved to authorize release of logo contest, with the date of the design submission amended to Nov 15th, seconded by Representative Keans. Mike Izbicki stated that we should highlight this by press release to play up press for applications. This is the right time for more support.

Discussion:

Malcolm Taylor stated that we should use this as an opportunity to remind people about the NHRTA.

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Peter Burling agreed that this is a critical point – we need to call reporters and editors about publicizing rail project in a positive way.

Nancy Larson asked if we could distribute this to the SAUs for high school students. Tom Mahon will facilitate this with the SAUs.

Peter Burling suggested that we amend the age requirements to read: Individual applicants, age 18 years and older, or students under age 18 may submit an application under supervision of a teacher.

Motion carried unanimously.

VI. By law amendment – *Positive recommendation from the Executive Committee on July 24, 2009*

Tim Moore reviewed the proposed by-law amendments to replace an officer mid-term. This is the same letter distributed to the authority in June.

Malcolm Taylor moved to approve, seconded by David Preece. The motion was approved unanimously.

VII. Committee Updates

a. Public Relations Committee – covered under logo contest item

VIII. Other Discussion

Peter Burling would like to hold a press conference to announce the submittal of the applications. We need to attract the attention of the press corps.

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Christine Walker asked if we should invite press to come to our regular meetings. Peter Burling remarked that they are invited.

We will schedule a press conference for August 19 if the Governor is available to attend.

Kathy Hersh will accept names for adding to her cc list and will notify everyone when something is scheduled.

Tim Moore asked if we could get copies of the 6 New England Commissioners' remarks and powerpoints and post on the website. Kit will check into it.

IX. Adjourn

Tim Mahon moved to adjourn, seconded by David Preece. The motion passed unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Kerrie Diers